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Israeli Spy 'Recruited' By CIA

Durenberger Alleged To Charge Action Preceded Pollard

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The former chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, David F. Durenberger (R-Minn.), told an American Jewish audience that the Central Intelligence Agency set the stage for the Jonathan Jay Pollard spy scandal by recruiting an Israeli army officer to spy against Israel in 1982, according to several people who heard the allegation.

During two meetings last Sunday in Palm Beach, Fla., Durenberger said that then-CIA Director William J. Casey "changed the rules of the game" by authorizing a spy operation against Israel following its 1982 invasion of Lebanon, according to sources present. The first report of Durenberger's charge was published yesterday by The Jerusalem Post, an English-language newspaper, in an article by its Washington correspondent, Wolf Blitzer.

In Washington, two sources said an Israeli military officer who was unhappy with the Israeli invasion of Lebanon volunteered to provide limited, classified information to the U.S. government. Under a secret agreement between the United States and Israel, both governments had pledged not to recruit spies in each other's country but have acknowledged that it would be unrealistic to prohibit unsolicited "walk-ins" who offer potentially sensitive intelligence information, the two sources said.

Durenberger yesterday issued a statement that did not deny Blitzer's report but said the senator's intention had been only to "relay

... public speculation that the United States may have had intelligence sources within the Israeli government." The statement added that Durenberger was not trying to justify Israel's 1984 recruitment of Pollard, an American who worked for the Navy as an intelligence analyst and who was recently sentenced to life in prison for espionage.

In Israel, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin denied the allegations in The Jerusalem Post. Durenberger, in his statement, said only, "I will not comment on the specifics of U.S. intelligence operations overseas." CIA officials also refused to comment.

However, two participants in the off-the-record, Palm Beach sessions with Durenberger, who declined to be identified, gave The Washington Post accounts of his remarks that were almost identical to Blitzer's article. In addition, another source, who was not in Palm Beach but who has extensive knowledge of U.S. intelligence operations, substantiated the main points of the story allegedly told by Durenberger.

Durenberger stressed two or three times that nothing done by the United States justified Israel's recruitment of Pollard, according to the two participants. But, he reportedly said, Israel's actions were partially explainable by its feeling that the United States had changed the tacit mutual understanding that the two countries would not spy on each other.

"This is not a one-way street," one source who took notes quoted Durenberger as saying. The sources said Durenberger added that he and Rep. Lee H. Hamilton (D-Ind.), former chairman of the House Select Committee on Intelligence, had been "stiffed" by Casey when they tried to learn details of what the United States was up to. Both Durenberger and Hamilton completed their terms as chairman in January.

The sources said Durenberger did not identify the Israeli allegedly recruited by the CIA except to say that he was an army officer. The officer eventually was detected after Israeli officials saw information in the U.S. press that could only have come from someone with access to classified material within Israel's military establishment, Durenberger reportedly added.

According to a source in Washington, the agent gave the United States classified material that the source described "as not dramatic but useful" in a relationship that lasted until 1984. He did not say whether the relationship was terminated because the agent was detected or for other reasons.

In his two years as chairman of the Senate intelligence committee, Durenberger had a stormy relationship with Casey, who recently resigned following brain surgery. According to sources, Durenberger tried to get Casey to review in advance the sources for sensitive intelligence gathering operations, but Casey refused.

After the Pollard affair became public in late 1985, Durenberger learned about the Israeli officer who had provided information to the United States for two years, according to one source who said the Israeli's spying was never of the same magnitude as that done by Pollard.

Durenberger's comments yesterday took place amid the intense controversy rekindled by the Pollard sentencing and U.S. anger at the revelation that two Israelis instrumental in recruiting Pollard—Rafael Eitan and Air Force Col. Aviem Sella—had been promoted.

The situation has become so heated that a delegation of American-Jewish leaders currently is in Jerusalem seeking to warn Israeli leaders that their insensitivity could cause serious, long-term damage to relations with the United States.

It was against this background that Durenberger, who is likely to face a tough race for reelection next year, went to Palm Beach to participate in the meetings with potential contributors arranged by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), the principal pro-Israeli lobbying group. The first of his talks was to about 150 people at the home of a local Israel supporter, Irwin Levy, and the other was to some 50 people at a South Palm Beach condominium.

Durenberger could not be reached yesterday for further comment.

If Durenberger's allegations are true, it is unclear why top-level Israeli officials denied them so vehemently since U.S. spying presumably would help Jerusalem deflect the criticism it has absorbed over the Pollard case.

One possible explanation is that the Israelis, for reasons of internal morale and security, have been reluctant to admit that one of their military officers had spied against the Jewish state.